

*March 10, 2011*

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) today spoke on the floor of the House of Representatives about the urgent need for foreclosure relief in San Joaquin County and the Central Valley. In his remarks, Rep. McNerney called on the Administration to develop more effective efforts to decrease the number of foreclosures in the area.

Congressman McNerney also voiced his opposition to H.R. 830, legislation offered today by House Republicans that would cancel the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) Refinance Program. This program aims to help homeowners refinance who are “underwater” or owe more on their mortgage than their home is worth. Rep. McNerney argues that the program, which became operational last fall, should be strengthened and made more effective instead of abolished.

The text of Rep. McNerney’s remarks is below.

“I’m proud to represent much of San Joaquin County, which is the jewel of California’s Central Valley. Our Valley is a great place to live and work, but unfortunately we’ve been hit very hard by the economic downturn. The Valley has been ground zero for the foreclosure crisis.

“Over the past few years, thousands of families in San Joaquin County and throughout the Valley have lost their homes. I’ve hosted foreclosure assistance workshops; I’ve met with hardworking people who were misled by lenders who are struggling to stay on top of their mortgages. I’ve seen grown men cry because they couldn’t keep a roof over their children, I’ve talked to veterans who served their country only to return home to notices of default, and I’ve met seniors on the brink of homelessness.

“The administration’s foreclosure prevention initiatives have fallen short in the Valley. Simply put, the administration’s programs haven’t effectively served the people underwater on their mortgage, and the administration hasn’t been tough enough on the big banks. I call on President Obama and his cabinet to develop more effective efforts to stem the tide of foreclosures.

“But despite these shortcomings, the bill the House Republicans are offering today is absolutely the wrong approach. It’s throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Instead of cancelling foreclosure relief programs at their beginning stages like they’re proposing, we should be strengthening them so they’re more effective. Mortgage counselors from my district advise and plead to improve our efforts, to get tough on big banks and provide meaningful relief to families. Stabilizing the housing market is critical to economic recovery and creating jobs.

“For those reasons, I oppose H.R. 830, and I yield back the balance of my time.”

